



Loneliness and Heartbreak

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By Dr. Margaret Paul

Addictive behavior is an attempt to avoid loneliness and heartbreak, yet all it does is perpetuate it. Discover how Inner Bonding can move you out of addictive behavior and heal a broken heart.

Take a moment to think back to your childhood and adolescence. How many times did you have experiences that led to you feeling rejected, betrayed, ridiculed or invisible? If you are like most people, you had many such experiences - with parents, siblings, peers, teachers, professionals or religious leaders.

When someone - especially someone who is important in a child's life - behaves in a mean, rejecting, judgmental or dismissive way to that child, it is devastating to the child. Until children develop their protections, they are very vulnerable to being hurt - to the deep loneliness that comes from heartache and heartbreak.

Becky was the first-born child to a powerful, successful, judgmental father. For the first two years of her life as an only child, Becky was daddy's special little girl. But when her brother was born, Becky suddenly found herself being judged and dismissed by her father.

Becky was heartbroken. She could not understand why her father no longer loved her. She decided that there must be something wrong with her, so she went about learning how to be a perfect little girl to please her father. But she never again got his devoted love and attention.

As an adult, Becky found that she was constantly looking for a man who would treat her in the special way her father treated her before her brother was born. Becky felt happy only when she was being held in the tender way a loving father holds his daughter. She kept seeking a man who would heal her heartbreak.

Becky found many men who would temporarily be the father to her that she was seeking, but each relationship ended leaving her feeling even more heartache and heartbreak. Eventually, the man would tire of his lover being a child and would move on. Each time a man left, Becky would feel depressed and desperate until she found another man to hold her.

Becky was deeply abandoning her own inner child in having sex to get the holding. Each time she betrayed herself by having sex to get held, she felt worse and worse about herself. Each time her boyfriend left, she had to take more and more prescription drugs to numb out the heartbreak and loneliness.

Becky was spending her life protecting against the loneliness of her childhood. Yet everything she did to protect against it brought it about.

In desperation, after being rejected one more time, Becky called me for help. In her work with me, she discovered the devastating heartbreak that happened with her father, which led to her addictive behavior with men. She wanted a healthy relationship and saw that she would never have one as long as she wanted her partner to be a father to her.

In doing her Inner Bonding work, Becky came to understand that, as an adult, it was her own behavior that was now causing her heartbreak. Every time she gave her child away to a man, she was abandoning herself, just as her father had abandoned her. Her depression was no longer due to her father. It was being caused by her unloving behavior toward herself.

Becky learned to imagine a very loving older man who would be with her, hold her, and deeply care about her. Each time she opened her heart to being tenderly loved by her Guidance, she would feel the peace and joy that she had formerly felt only when being held by a man. Becky got a stuffed animal that represented her two-year old lonely child, and held her child while imagining herself being held by her Guidance. Slowly, her deep heartbreak got healed.

Until we each take on the responsibility of healing our childhood heartache and heartbreak, we will act out addictively in various ways to avoid the deep loneliness of heartbreak. We all have heartbreak to heal, but it will never heal through addictive behavior. We can heal our broken heart only by becoming a spiritually connected loving parent to our own broken-hearted wounded child.

Only Spirit can heal our broken heart, and only we can make the decision to open to the healing love that is God.

Heartbreak

By Dr. Margaret Paul

Discover how the heartbreak of your childhood causes emotional and physical problems today, and what you can do to heal.

Celine, an only child, was seven years old when her mother died tragically in a car accident. She and her father were devastated. However, unlike so many of my clients who lost parents and no one was there for them, Celine's father was completely there for her, even while dealing with his own grief and heartbreak. Celine could call him anytime at work and he would talk to her or come home to lovingly hold her. Because he was so completely there for her, her feelings of grief, heartbreak, sadness and sorrow did not get stuck in her body. Each time they came up, they were released due to the caring, compassion, tenderness, gentleness, consistency and understanding of her loving father.

As a result of her father's love, Celine did not develop the fear of intimacy and loss that so many people experience as a result of the loss of the parent. She did not close her heart to protect herself from future loss.

However, most of us did not have loving parents to help us move through the heartbreaks of childhood. In fact, many of us had parents that caused much of the heartbreak with various forms of abuse. We needed to numb out and find protections/addictions to manage the heartbreak and loneliness of rejection, abuse and loss. As a result, the pain got stuck in our bodies, causing both physical and emotional damage.

Emotional Damage

Without a loving parent such as Celine's father, we had no choice but to learn to buffer the pain. You might have learned to use food, drugs or alcohol at a young age. Perhaps you became addicted to TV, computer games, tantrums, fantasy or caretaking. You might have learned to stay focused in your mind rather than in your body, and to live in the past or future rather than in the present moment. In one way or another, you learned to disconnect from your deeper feelings of heartache, heartbreak, loneliness, helplessness over others, sorrow and grief, because you did not have the ability to manage these very painful feelings any other way.

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But addictions and inner disconnection cause other problems - loss of a sense of self, low self-worth, fears of rejection and engulfment. The more you disconnect from your feelings, the more you are dependent upon others for approval and acceptance. This leads to relationship problems and to more addictive behaviors. The result is living with anxiety, depression, fear, anger, guilt and/or shame.

Childhood heartbreak has hugely devastating effects that need to be healed as adults. Now, we can go back and learn to give ourselves what we didn't receive as children - compassion, caring, tenderness, gentleness and understanding - and heal much of the emotional damage. We can learn to manage the deeply painful feelings that we could not manage as children.

Physical Damage

When children are physically and/or sexually abused, the energy it takes to survive causes a huge amount of stress in the physical body. When stressed, the body goes into flight or fight, which means that the blood leaves the organs, brain, and immune system and goes into the arms and legs for fighting or fleeing. However, when we cannot fight or flee, we freeze, causing the blood to stay stuck in our arms and legs. This gradually erodes the immune system, preparing the way for illness. Much current illness is the result of childhood abuse.

While we can currently eat well, get enough exercise, and heal the emotional stress, sometimes the physical damage is deeply challenging. It is not easy to heal the years of damage caused by the stress of abuse. It is vitally important for you to not judge yourself for the illnesses you might be suffering that started as a child from being abused or from suffering unbearable loss.

Today, you need to be gentle with yourself. Judging yourself for the emotional and physical damage of heartbreak only causes more heartbreak. Instead, you need to be deeply caring, tender and gentle with yourself, consistently giving the love and acceptance to yourself that you did not receive as a child. This is what heals.

Managing Loneliness and Heartbreak

By Dr. Margaret Paul

Addictive behavior is often an attempt to avoid the deeply painful feeling of loneliness, heartbreak and helplessness. Yet this inner abandonment leads to even more problems.

My experience from years of counseling individuals and couples is that most of the problems from which people suffer stem from how they handle the events of life, rather than the events themselves.

Certainly traumatic and tragic events such as loss of loved ones, financial loss, and health issues are extremely challenging. However, some people manage to move through these events with equanimity, while others remain stuck in fear, anxiety, anger and depression. The difference is in how people handle deeply painful feelings.

I have discovered that there are three core feelings that most people will do almost anything to avoid feeling: loneliness, heartbreak and helplessness.

Loneliness is an intense sad, sinking or burning feeling within. This feeling can be triggered in numerous situations, such as:

- Loss of a loved one
- Not having a partner, family or friends with whom to share time and love
- Being around others but being closed off to them
- Being around others when they are closed off to you

Other than a traumatic loss, the latter is often the most challenging in everyday life, and this can occur throughout the day. For example, you walk into work happy and open. You greet your friend, and he or she barely responds to you. If you are truly open to your own feelings, you will feel a stab of loneliness. Yet most people are so closed off to this feeling that they immediately attempt to avoid the feeling with some kind of addictive behavior. They might grab a donut, while shaming or blaming - telling themselves that they must have done something wrong or that their friend is a jerk. These addictive behaviors are geared to protect against feeling the pain of the loneliness. And they work, for the moment, to appease the feeling, but the feeling doesn't actually go away. It just goes deeper within and may eventually cause physical symptoms, such as back pain or some form of illness.

Heartbreak can occur in many different situations, such as:

- Loss - of a loved one, of health, of financial security
- Others being unloving to you, to others, to animals, to the planet
- Others harming themselves

Helplessness is a similar feeling to loneliness - intense inner turmoil. In the example above, of greeting your friend and receiving a cold response, not only do you have the stab of loneliness, but you also feel the pain of helplessness over your friend's behavior. You cannot make him or her connect with you. However, because this is such a difficult feeling, you don't want to know that you cannot have control over another or over the outcome of things. To avoid knowing about your lack of control, you may shame yourself: "It's my fault. If I'm different, I can get others to be different." Or you might blame your friend, attempting to get him or her to change. Both shame and blame are attempts to avoid accepting helplessness over others.

Once you turn to addictive behaviors such as food, alcohol, drugs, activities, shame and blame, you have abandoned yourself. In attempting to avoid feeling the loneliness, heartbreak and helplessness, you have created inner aloneness - self-abandonment. Self-abandonment occurs when your intent is to avoid pain rather than lovingly attending to your authentic feelings. The combination of avoiding loneliness, heartbreak and helplessness, and the aloneness that comes from inner abandonment, can lead to anxiety, depression and despair. People then often turn to prescription drugs to further avoid their feelings.

Managing the feelings of loneliness, heartbreak and helplessness is not as hard as you may think it is. If you practice the following aspects of Inner Bonding, you will find that you do not need to use your various addictions to avoid pain.

- Stay tuned in to your body/feelings so that you know when you are feeling lonely or helpless. It's very important to be able to acknowledge and name the feeling; it may take some time to recognize these feelings since you may have been avoiding them for so long. Consciously decide that you want responsibility for nurturing and then releasing these feelings.
- Welcome and embrace the feelings, opening with deep compassion for these feelings. Connect with a spiritual Source of love and compassion (which you can learn to do through

practicing Inner Bonding); open to this Source and ask for help in having compassion for the feelings.

- Hold the feelings as you would a child who is hurting, with deep love and understanding. Just be with the feelings, with deep acceptance of them, for a few minutes.
- Open to learning about what the feelings are telling you about a person or a situation, and about what would be the loving action toward the person or situation.
- Consciously be willing to release the feelings. Imagine the feelings of loneliness, heartbreak and helplessness moving through you and being released into the Universe - into Divine Love. Ask Spirit to replace these feelings with inner peace.

You will find that these painful feelings will release if you practice these steps rather than abandon yourself in the face of painful events and experiences.